



VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS

MVP

Hebrews 9:15–28

Tim Badal | February 7, 2021

One thing we have been learning over and over in the book of Hebrews is an important truth that will transform our lives. It will transform the way we live, the way we give. It will transform all of who we are, 24/7, 365 days out of the year. The truth of Hebrews is that Jesus is the greatest of all time.

Now, as we've been going through these chapters, we keep hearing the same note—Jesus is the greatest, Jesus is the greatest, Jesus is the greatest—and rightly so. Don't ever allow that to become rote or monotonous, because that fact will transform us from the inside out. So this morning we're going to once again learn that Jesus is the greatest, but from a different perspective and vantage point. We'll learn that Jesus is the most valuable of all people.

Today is a special day in our country. At 5:30 tonight, hundreds of millions of TVs will be tuned in to the Super Bowl. The name of the Super Bowl is "The Clash of the Ages" or "The Battle of the Ages." We have a young quarterback in Patrick Mahomes and we have an old quarterback, Tom Brady. I still feel young because Tom Brady is my age and he's still playing football. If you've ever played in our Turkey Bowl, you might see a little shadow of Tom Brady when you watch your pastor play.

Seriously, at the end of this day, a victor is going to be named and a trophy is going to be given. The championship trophy is going to be handed to one group of individuals. Right after that trophy is given, another trophy will be given—the MVP trophy. It's actually the Pete Rozelle trophy that will be given to the greatest player in the year's greatest game. Now, there will be great performances by lots of people, but 16 writers and broadcasters will determine and vote on who the best of the best is. This person will be brought up to the stage and will be handed a life-size silver football as a way to recognize their most valuable performance in this game. There's no other gift given; there's no reward of money or a car or a trip. It is just the recognition that in the biggest game of the year, this one player came out on top. The biggest wagering that will go on today is not who will win and lose the game. Because of this year's Super Bowl and the two quarterbacks who are playing, the biggest betting right now is on who will be the MVP.

Can I tell you that in the heart of every person who lives on this earth, they're wagering on who the MVP is? Not in a football game, but in life. Did you know that people are wagering, not with money, but with their souls, about who the most important individual in this world is? About who they're going to worship, who they're going to give their time, talents and treasures to? About who they're going to dedicate their life to?

Now, a lot of people have their own ideas on who the best MVP is. Some even think it's themselves, which we'll talk about in a few moments. The writer of Hebrews says once again that Jesus Christ is the MVP. He is the greatest of all time. It is our job as Christ followers to wager all in on that truth; to not waver, to not falter in that faith or understanding.

When the writer says that Jesus is the MVP, that doesn't mean there haven't been great performances along the way by other human beings. The angels, the patriarchs, the prophets have done great things. In their place and in their moment, they did awesome works for God. Their works were remarkable. Then the law, the tabernacle and later the temple also did some great things. They did a lot of good in their time in the spotlight. But amidst all of that, the writer of Hebrews says, "All of that stuff from



the Old Testament was good, but Jesus is greater. Jesus is better. Jesus is superior. Jesus is the greatest of all time.” We need to put our faith and trust in that.

In Hebrews 9:15-28, the author is once again going to explain why this is true. He begins to do this by talking about this idea of a Mediator. We’re going to answer three questions today, starting with who is our Mediator? But before we can answer that, we have to look at what a mediator is. It’s not a word we use often, but it’s a word that’s used six times in the New Testament. A mediator is a middle man between two opposing parties. He’s a go-between, the one who bridges the gap, who builds a bridge between two groups of people. He does this by being someone who is trusted by both sides. Even though the two sides may not trust one another, he is trusted as one who can speak and act on their behalf.

Who is the Mediator?

When it comes to the relationship between God and man, the people under the old covenant said, “We need a mediator. It’s clear that we are sinners and that we are in trouble because of our sin. We need someone to go between us and God. But we need someone who is like us—flesh and blood—who can endure trials and troubles, who knows what it’s like to be a human. We need someone who we can relate to, someone who can represent us well. The problem with that is whatever mediator they would come up with, God would say, “They’re not good enough.” Abraham—not good enough. Moses—not good enough. David—not good enough. John the Baptist—not good enough. They were great, especially from a human perspective, but from God’s perspective they were sinful like the rest of us.

You see, God wanted a Mediator as well. Since the Garden of Eden, God has desired for a Mediator to come, to redeem people back to Himself. But the problem is God’s Mediator needed to be perfect in every way. So there was no man, no woman, no one young or old, who could meet the criteria of being God’s perfect Mediator, but also one who was relatable to humanity.

So here we have a problem, that is until the incarnation of Jesus Christ. That is why the author says in verse 15 Who our Mediator is. He says, “*Therefore, he...*” Now, who is this “he”? We’ve got to go back to verses 13-14 to see the context:

For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Therefore, Jesus Christ is the Mediator of the new covenant. Our go-between is Jesus. Now, why does He meet this criterion? It’s because He became one of us. He put on flesh and made His dwelling among us. He endured trials and tribulations and yes, even temptations. On the God side of the equation, He did so with utter perfection and without blemish. This Jesus is able to bring two opposing parties together. Now, before you think, “Well, we’ve got our guy and God has His guy, and we just happened to get the same guy,” remember that we didn’t choose Jesus. God, knowing we would never choose one who would work for us, who would relate to us and who would be perfect, the Bible says God demonstrated His own love for us in this, that while we were still sinners, God sent Christ to die for us (Romans 5:8).

In other words, God on both sides of the covenant brings us One Who meets our need for a Savior, Who knows our pain and our plight, but Who also can say He’s holy and righteous. But much of the world won’t select Jesus. We live in a world where we’re looking for mediators. Some will pursue mediators in other religions, such as Buddha, the gods of Hinduism, Mohammad in the Islamic faith. Others will choose Mary or some other saint of the Christian religion. Probably the most common thinking is, “I’m my own mediator. I’ll figure it out on my own.” But God’s Word says in 1 Timothy 2:5, “*There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*” He’s our Mediator. The writer of Hebrews then moves on to give us the reasons why Jesus is qualified to be in this role. Look at verses 16-24:

¹⁶ For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. ¹⁷ For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. ¹⁸ Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. ¹⁹ For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, ²⁰ saying, “This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you.” ²¹ And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. ²² Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

²³ Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴ For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.

Why is He so valuable?

In these verses, the writer is articulating the old covenant and how it sought to make people right in their sin. We have learned that it didn't do all the cleansing it could. It wasn't a forever cleansing and did not address the conscience. So what we need to understand is what made Jesus better. What was there about Him that made Him a better Mediator?

The first thing we see is that Jesus shed blood in a way that was different from the old system. Notice that it says in verse 22, *"...without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins."*

A couple weeks ago I was asked by an individual who I could tell was asking their question with fear and trepidation, but I'm glad they asked it. Sometimes we know something is important, but we don't know why. Their question went like this: "Pastor, why is God so infatuated with blood? Why do we sing about blood and talk about the blood and read about the blood? Why is that such a big deal? Why is it that the Bible talks about blood all the time?" Many of us just assume there's a reason for it, but we don't know why. This is going to help us understand why Jesus Christ is so valuable to us.

The shedding of blood reminds us that sin is a terrible offense.

The old covenant talks about the blood of goats, rams and all the various animals that were sacrificed. Because we're Gentiles, we forget this. When the Jews went to the temple, they would enter the outer court. It wasn't like our lobby, where there would be nice music playing and nice pictures. I don't mean to be crass, but what the Jews heard in the outer court was the killing of animals. If you've ever been part of the slaughtering of animals, it is not pretty. There are sounds you don't want to hear. The animals were grabbed and forcibly put on the altar, then they would be cut. You would hear yelps and cries. This was what surrounded the temple. Worshipers in the days of the old covenant were reminded of how heinous their sins were. They would realize that if it weren't for those scape goats, it would be them on the altar. It would be them fighting for their lives, yelling and screaming to stop, feeling the pain about to come their way. Then their flesh would be sliced.

As New Testament followers of Jesus Christ, we are not acquainted with this reality, but during Old Testament times, they understood the cost for sin. Blood told them that sin was heinous. It was a terrible offense.

The shedding of blood teaches us that atonement is costly.

Today, we bring coffee to church. "I'm going to church. I've got my coffee—I'm ready." But during the old covenant, they would bring their own animal. It was an animal they had cared for—the prize of their herds. The animal walked beside them. They would feed it a few more times on the way to the temple. Then they would pick up the animal and hand it to the priest. The priest would take the live animal that had been tended so carefully, he would place it on the altar, cut its throat and it would bleed. That animal they had invested so much time and energy into just lost its life.

Listen, my friends, sin is not a *faux pas*. Sin is not an indiscretion or a lapse in judgment. Sin is a heinous transgression against a holy God. We make light of sin. "Oh, well, to sin is to be human." To err is to be human, but sin is an offense. That Jewish individual would know that because that which was alive was now dead. They would realize, "That could be me."

The shedding of blood brings forgiveness and life.

There's also a positive side to blood. Why do we talk about blood? Because in Leviticus 17:11, we learn that there is life in the blood. The crazy thing is that the Old Testament said someone had to die. We saw that in the Garden of Eden in Genesis 3. As surely as sin came, so came death. Romans 6:23 says, "The wages of sin is death..." In that dying, there would be life for the individual for whom the sacrifice was made.

The best way to explain this was to remember that night in Egypt when the Spirit of God went through the streets. There was death the night before that first Passover. Many animals were killed, then their blood was applied to the doorposts of the homes of the Jewish people. Then God's judgment passed over them. It wasn't just a matter of a life taken, but also of life given. Why do

we talk about the blood? It reminds us of our sin, it reminds us of the cost of the atoning for our sins, but it's also a reminder that with the shedding of blood we have forgiveness of sins and a new lease on life. That's why we sing, "O precious is the flow that makes me white as snow. No other fount I know, nothing but the blood of Jesus."

Now we know why God is so infatuated with blood. Here's the amazing thing. In order for our sins to be taken care of in the new covenant, we couldn't just have the blood of goats and lambs anymore. We need someone better. So this Mediator Jesus, Who was the perfect man and also the all-perfect God, made the willful decision to offer Himself as a sacrifice for many. That is why He is so valuable. This Jesus, Who was both man and God, placed Himself on the altar—the cross of Calvary—so we might be redeemed back to God.

Now in verses 24-26 the writer gives us the highlight reel.

²⁴For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. ²⁵Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, ²⁶for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Now go to verse 28:

²⁸So Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

We need to remember what the book of Hebrews has already told us about the superiority of Jesus Christ. We see the supremacy of Christ as a High Priest in these ways:

1. His frequency. We're told earlier in Hebrews that unlike the high priests who would enter into the Holy of Holies once a year, Jesus enters into the holy places of God, continually interceding on our behalf. We don't have to wait for a specific day on the calendar. Each and every day we wake up, we've got a Mediator Who is mediating for us.

2. His continuity. We see this in the fact that the high priest in the old covenant would serve for a lifetime, but then he would die. But we're told over and over again that Jesus is our Great High Priest forever.

3. His intimacy. The Israelites, and even the high priests, were kept at arm's length from God. There were curtains and doors they couldn't go past unless they were a priest. Then there were other curtains and doors they couldn't enter unless they were the high priest. Even then, when a high priest entered the Holy of Holies, he entered a smoke-filled room in which God's presence was shrouded. They would be kept from God's full revelation, because a sinful man could not be in the presence of almighty God.

Now there are no barriers with Jesus. In fact, verse 24 tells us *"For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf."* That word "presence" literally means He could appear face to face with God the Father.

The amazing thing about Jesus, and one of the ways He's more valuable than any other, is that He is the only One Who can look eye to eye with us as men and women and can also look eye to eye as an equal to God. That's why the writer of Hebrews can say He's our brother, but He's also the eternal Son of God Who is equal to the Father. This is our Mediator, the One Who is able to mediate on both sides.

4. His sufficiency. The book of Hebrews says the Old Testament altar could not address the conscience. It could address the physical, but not the spiritual, not the emotional, not the mental. But Jesus can. All of this is important, but there's one element the writer of this text wants to get across and it's one more reason why Jesus is the greatest of all time.

I want you to notice that a phrase is repeated twice. The new way happened "once for all." Some translations say continually. The old way had to happen over and over and over again. We don't understand from a Gentile, 21st century American worldview what's being said here. In the temple, during the days of Jesus, there were so many sacrifices being made, animal after animal being killed, that they built an aqueduct to remove the blood from the place of the slaughter to outside the city. It was called the River of Blood. It flowed like a river with gallons and gallons of blood. This was another reminder of how heinous sin is. But with Jesus, there's no river of blood anymore. There is no need for it. Why? Did we stop sinning? No, we kept sinning and even found new ways to sin. The reason wasn't because God didn't think blood was necessary anymore. Blood was still necessary. The reason

was that Jesus' sacrifice was infinitely greater and more supreme than any sacrifice. He didn't to bleed anymore. That's why in verse 14 it says, *"How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God."*

When Jesus went to the cross and shed His blood for you and me, He died once and for all. This theme of Jesus dying once for sin is seen four times in the book of Hebrews. We see it in Hebrews 7:27, 9:12, 10:10 and 10:12. Plus Paul tells us the same thing in Romans 6:10 and Peter tells us the same thing in 1 Peter 3:18.

Death was arrested when Christ died on the cross. New life was given. There's no need for more shedding of blood because Jesus Christ did it once for all. That's why, when we sing about the cross or when we talk about forgiveness, it should revolutionize who we are. We should be yelling "Amen" every time the blood of Jesus is mentioned. We don't see a river of blood flowing from the church; we see a cross that doesn't even have a martyred Savior on it. We have a Mediator Who is sitting in the presence of Almighty God, interceding on our behalf continually. Why? Because when Jesus died on the cross, He said, *"It is finished"* (John 19:30).

What does a relationship with Him produce?

Our third question today is what does this mean? What does a relationship with our Mediator produce? Now that we know He is our Mediator, now that we know what He has done, now that we know the Bible has been pointing to Jesus being this Mediator throughout the old covenant, what do we do with this knowledge? What happens to us in our response to the Mediator?

Without Him, we will receive severe judgment.

Look at Hebrew 9:27. Without Jesus, all we can expect is severe judgment. *"And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment."* Here the author pivots from the Mediator being a priest and now goes to a courtroom setting. Each of us, at some point in our lives, are going to stand before a holy and righteous Judge, which is God the Father. When that happens, God will demand perfection. You and I are going to be on trial. The Bible tells us that after we die, we will all stand before God. What will your argument be on that day?

When Tim walks into the courtroom and God says, "Why should I allow you into My heaven?" I will say, "I'm not guilty." The Father will say, "The Bible says all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." "Um, well, I've lived a good life." He says, "Yeah, a lot of people live good lives, but even good lives are filthy rags before a holy God. What else you got?" "Um, nothing." What's left for me? Severe judgment. Without a Mediator, nothing can be accomplished. I have no one to speak on my behalf. What should I expect?

If you look over a page to Hebrew 10:26, you'll read this: *"For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth..."* What's the knowledge of the truth? That Jesus is your Mediator. Give your life to Him. Bow the knee to Him. Submit yourself to Him. But if you hear that truth and just keep on sinning as if it doesn't matter, notice what it says next: *"...there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins."* You've got nothing. There's nothing for you to hold on to. So what can you expect? Verse 27 says, *"...but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries."*

The very sad thing this morning is that some in this place will say, "I don't need to make much of Jesus. I don't need to listen to what Tim is saying. I don't really care. There are more important things in this world. I wish you would talk more about me and less about Jesus." You're going to turn away from the truth that Jesus is the Mediator and you're going to live your life. But God, because of His common grace to you, will give you new mercies every morning (Lamentations 3:22-23). He's a faithful God. But one day when you are without breath, you will appear before the throne of God. That day, God will not say, "Oh, I'm glad to see you were on the attendance rolls of Village Bible Church." That's not good enough. "Oh, I'm glad you listened to Pastor Tim. He's pretty good." No, not good enough. Then you are going to be consigned once and for all to a place called hell, where you will experience unending and unbearable consequences for your sin that will go on forever and ever and ever.

The sad thing is, it wasn't that you didn't have an option. Jesus is right before you, right now. He's standing before you saying, "I love you. I care for you. And because you needed it, I died on the cross for your sins. All I ask is that you would accept Me as your Mediator, making Me your Advocate."

With Him, we will have supreme joy.

By placing your faith and trust in Jesus Christ as the greatest of all time, you are taken from a place of judgment to a place of supreme joy. Notice the contrast between verse 27 and verse 28. In verse 27, there is doom and gloom, judgment, pain and sorrow. But verse 28 says, *“So Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time...”* Why? Because He’s alive, my friends. *“...[N]ot to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.”*

While you may enjoy life during this moment, without Christ you’re going to end up at a time and place when you’re going to need Him and your eternity is going to depend on it. When we make Christ our Mediator, when we receive the free gift of His mediating work in our lives, we don’t just experience supreme joy in the next life, but also in the life that is already here.

The word for “eagerly” is always used in a positive sense in Scripture. It’s a word that was used by one of the Greek philosophers who said it was the most supreme of all joys. Literally, the best way to explain it is pure ecstasy, unending joy, amazing joy. When we place our lives under the mediating work of Jesus Christ, we will experience the unspeakable joy that comes when we know our sins are forgiven and we’re in a right relationship with God—not just in eternity, but as we eagerly await His return.

So let me ask, “Who’s your Mediator? Who are you wagering on as your MVP?” For some you, it may be someone else. Maybe it’s a relationship. Maybe it’s some pursuit in life. Maybe it’s your own good deeds. But that will all end in severe judgment. When you put all your time and energy down on Jesus Christ, saying, “Lord, You’re it,” then you will experience the joy of a right relationship with God, a peace with God, a great peace and mercy from God. You will experience something you and I could never experience apart from Christ.

Let’s consider two quick applications. First, if you’re pursuing someone else, stop and pursue Jesus. Second, if you’re a follower of Jesus Christ, this truth forces you to not look lightly at your sin. The sins you did when no one was looking this week—that thought, that word, that action you thought didn’t bother anybody—those were the sins that put Christ on the cross. He endured all that hostility, even being forsaken by the Father, but He did this for the joy set before Him (Hebrews 12:2).

How then can we just go on deliberately sinning? It should cause us to acknowledge, “What an offense my sin is to God. I’m going to seek His forgiveness quickly. I’m going to do all I can to build disciplines and godliness into my life, through the Word and through the Spirit, so I don’t ever do this again. How crazy that I would trample the blood of Jesus Christ in this way.”

Let us not trifle with sin, but let us rejoice and be grateful.

Village Bible Church | 847 North State Route 47, Sugar Grove, IL 60554 | (630) 466-7198 | www.villagebible.org/sugar-grove

All Scriptures quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

Note: This transcription has been provided by Sermon Transcribers (www.sermontranscribers.com).